AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1735 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 11, 1944 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 34, NO. 28

WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accurately and without interpretation of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Having addressed an open letter last week to Tom Dewey, we intend to do likewise now by Franklin D. Roosevelt:

Dear Franklin:—We don't want to be precipitate with our congratulations, but since the Democratic National Convention in Chicago hasn't any other serious candidate, we take it for granted that you will accept a fourth-term nomination.

Regardless of what your enemies may say, we truly believe that you are undertaking a fourth-term campaign not in an ambitious or vainglorious spirit but because of a stern sense of duty to your country.

For twelve years you have served your country well in times of crisis and travail, with scarcely a breathing spell from the terrible strain of the world's toughest job. You have done your duty as you have seen it, not taking orders from anyone and never losing confidence in the future of our democracy.

These are things no one can ever take away from you, regardless of the outcome of the election and regardless of the smears which will doubtless be directed against you during the political campaign.

But your Administration has made serious mistakes which we call attention to now in a helpful rather than a critical spirit, because they must be corrected if you hope for re-election.

Open And Frank Policy

First, we ask that you be more open with the American people on matters of foreign policy. A suspicion prevails that you have not been firm enough with some of our Allies in this war who are giving the Four Freedoms mere lip service. Appeasement is just as fatal a policy now as it was before the war. It won't work with Stalin any more than it did with Hitler.

As to the conduct of the war on the fighting fronts, even your Republican opponents have found nothing to kick about. As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, you have done a fine job.

But the direction of the war effort on the home front has been beset with increasing difficulties and the problems now developing call for stronger leadership than you have shown in the past two years.

First, there is the immediate problem of a runaway cost of living while wage rates are frozen. The combined Labor War Board, made up of AFL and CIO advisers, has repeatedly warned you that this economic squeeze upon the millions of loyal workers in this country is insupportable. You have stalled and delayed and blocked any remedial action.

This is a serious charge but the facts support it. Price controls have been relaxed all along the line, but the Little Steel wage formula has remained rigid. You promised to investigate the ridiculously underrated cost of living index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that investigation has never followed to bog down.

We can understand your reluctance to open the door to inflation. Labor shares your fears of inflation. But unless wage rates are realistically adjusted to meet mounting living costs, American workers will be starved out and will not be able to give the service which the nation needs. This is too great a danger to risk.

Where To Get Off

The people you have put into office to direct war mobilization and economic stabilization seem to be guided by editorials in reactionary newspapers and have no regard for labor's pressing needs. We think they should be told where to get off.

We also think, Franklin, that it's about time you did something about reorganizing the Department of Labor. It's going to pot right now. It needs virile direction. We believe you should put a real representative of labor in charge of it and let him work out a plan for bringing in all bureaus dealing with labor into the department and working out a clear and uniform national labor policy.

While we're on the subject of labor, Mr. President, some of your boys seem to think the New Deal's policy is to give the CIO every possible break and the AFL every possible kick in the pants. These pinkos are the boys who have been secretly urging that you "purge" the New Deal. They are planning to take it over, with Henry Wallace as their leader. Get rid of them, before it's too late.

On the other side, you've got another bad bunch on your hands, the Southern bourbons. They think they've got you on the run, ever since the Barkley resignation incident. We urge you not to yield to them. For the most part they represent a form of native Fascism, which encourages un-American prejudices and stays in power because of the un-American poll-tax. Don't yield to them.

Franklin, when you first came into office you gave the country a shot in the arm of confidence which was badly needed. It's going to be needed again in the next four years when the ends and we have to clear up the wreckage in order to make a new start. If you've got it in you to inspire the American people anew, do it now. Otherwise, they may look for new leadership in November.

You are going to enter the ring for a fourth time in a title match. You are the champ. But in order to stay the champ for another four years, you've got to have what it takes. From our neutral corner, we wish you the best of luck.

Anti-Labor Congressman Drops Race Because of Bitter AFL Opposition

Louisville, Ky.—Another anti-labor Congressman bit the dust here when Rep. Beverly M. Vincent announced formal withdrawal from the race for re-election.

Vincent, who voted for the Connally-Smith Act and other anti-union legislation, declared in a written statement that pressure by the American Federation of Labor had forced the State Democratic organization to toss him overboard. He had served three terms in the House of Representatives.

Another Kentucky Congressman, Andrew J. May, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, is reported to be considering withdrawal of his candidacy because of labor's solid opposition. May, who has served seven terms, was active in drafting the final version of the Connally-Smith Act and pushed labor conscription legislation.

In letters to Ed H. Weyler, secretary of the Kentucky State Federation of Labor, AFL President William Green urged an all-out effort to defeat both Vincent and May, in accordance with the non-partisan policy of the Federation.

Weyler declared here that he, in turn, had urged all Kentucky union workers in the second Congressional district to register in the Democratic primaries and to vote for Earle C. Clements, an opponent of Vincent.

"Vincent voted against labor in Congress and he has proved to all down the line," Weyler explained.

Green Hails Result

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green hailed the withdrawal of Rep. B. M. Vincent from the Kentucky primaries as a signal victory for the Federation's campaign to eliminate members of Congress whose records have been hostile to the interests of organized labor.

Mr. Green predicted that as the campaign progresses, a large percentage of anti-labor Congressmen will be forced to withdraw or face certain defeat at the polls.

The AFL chief emphasized that the Federation's activities in this campaign are wholly in accord with its traditional non-partisan political policy, which is to reward labor's friends and defeat its enemies. That policy is being pursued, regardless of the political affiliation of the candidates, he said.

Four Million Unemployed Forecast Unless Reconversion Starts Soon

Washington, D. C.—Unless a more intelligent and effective program is developed to dovetail reconversion with production outlooks, America will have an army of four million unemployed on its hands at the end of this year, even if the war against Germany and Japan is still going on.

This is the ominous prediction of Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, based upon a thorough survey in the production program. He declares that the estimates were "conservative" rather than exaggerated.

Cutbacks already are being ordered at the rate of about twenty a week and the rate is due to climb in the next few months. Instead of a labor shortage, surpluses of manpower are bound to develop, Shishkin said.

Meanwhile, efforts of War Production Board Chairman Donald M. Nelson to authorize the start of a reconversion program with labor and materials not needed for the war effort are being blocked by the War and Navy Departments. The short-sighted policy of the military leaders appears to be refusing permission for any preparations for peace until the last shot in the war is fired.

American Federation of Labor leaders are throwing their full support behind Mr. Nelson's program which now offers the only hope of averting widespread unemployment should the war end suddenly.

Workers Win Navy's High Praise For Epic Production of Landing Craft

Washington, D. C.—Back of the successful invasions of the United States Navy in various parts of the world is a tremendous production of landing craft by workers in American shipyards, mills, factories, machine shops, and mines. These workers have been "laying it on the line," the Navy Department has just announced, with the result that almost 50,000 of these craft have been produced.

The Navy disclosed that through the first week in July, 1,824,162 tons have been built, representing 48,267 landing craft. It was last November when workers were asked to go all out in this vital phase of war work, and their response "has been magnificent," the Navy Department has said.

To illustrate just what these workers have done, the Navy says that during June, 1943, the production total was 56,289 tons but it skyrocketed to 197,992 tons in May, 1944.

This production achievement forms a glorious chapter in naval annals. The big push was under the direction of Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal. While Under Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Forrestal directed the entire production phase of the Navy's efforts.

Although a production victory has been won by the workers in the mills, factories, mines and shipyards of the Nation, this task of creating landing craft is far from complete, Rear Admiral Cochrane, Chief of the Bureau of Ships, who has the program immediately in charge, says:

"This job of building landing craft is not finished. Many more landing ships and craft are still to be built before we have enough to get to Tokyo."

This program means that more fighting men will successfully attack hostile shores more rapidly at more places all over the world. More than a million workers have built these hundreds of thousands of tons of landing craft of all types, ranging from rubber boats to Landing Ship, Dock—"ships half again as long as a football field capable of carrying complete Army units"—to see the words of Admiral Cochrane.

The Bureau of Ships, in cooperation with American labor and management, has produced the fleet, the same sometimes now applied to Landing Craft, that has reached a tonnage approximating that of the entire merchant marine of the United States before the war.

The needs of the Allied offensives stimulated the production of landing craft during the past six months. Labor and management redoubled their efforts to reach their goals, which entries said were impossible to achieve. Up to 70 hours a week, including 10 hours on Sunday, became the schedule for many workers engaged in building these landing craft.

The workers in 74 shipyards and 50,000 mills, factories, and machine shops, responded well to meet the requirements, the Navy said. While all of these workers did a good job, the Navy gave a special "well done" to the fishermen of the AFL Seafood Packing Engineers (AFL) working at the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company at Manitowoc, Wis.

Bureaucratic Buttinskis Barred From Future Interference With Rail Wages

Washington, D. C.—Railroad workers are now protected against any administrative tampering in the future with the processes of the Railway Labor Act.

That protection is contained in the bill extending the Price Control Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Roosevelt.

The section relating to the Railway Labor Act adequately safeguards the government's wage stabilization policy; but, at the same time, notifies all non-railroad government agencies that they must keep their hands off.

That section specifies that disputes on the rails shall be handled through the regular machinery of the Railway Labor Act.

Agencies set up under the act, such as Emergency Boards, must certify that their findings are in accord with Federal wage stabilization standards. Once they have done so, unions and carriers will be free to make signed agreements putting into effect the awards of such boards, and other agencies will be barred from "butting in" to upset the awards.

This provision is an outgrowth of the terrible mishandling of the rail wage controversy last winter.

It was sponsored, as a rider to the Price Control Act, by Rep. Robert Crosser, of Ohio, and Sen. Robert F. Wagner, of New York, and was adopted by both Houses without a single dissenting vote. Following the signing of the law by the President, Rep. Crosser said:

"The Railway Labor Act, which has been applauded throughout the nation as a model law for dealing with labor relations, is re-established with all its original authority.

"It should never have been interfered with, but in any event Congress has now unanimously declared it should not be tampered with in the future.

"Lest there be any doubt about the matter, it should be made clear that the amendment to the Price Control Act prospectively nullifies the voluntary character of the Railway Labor Act machinery.

"The rights that organized labor possessed under the act before are maintained and strengthened. There is no compulsion anywhere along the line. As heretofore, rail workers are in no way obligated to accept awards of Emergency Boards if they believe them unfair.

"Railroad labor, as a basic principle, has always opposed compulsory arbitration in any way, shape or form. That principle still prevails as emphatically as ever."

J. B. Colpoys, D. C. Marshal, Dies; Was Labor Leader And Editor

Washington, D. C.—John Bernard Colpoys, United States Marshal for the District of Columbia and President of the District's Central Labor Union died here after a sudden illness at the age of sixty-eight. Mr. Colpoys was well-known in political and labor circles throughout the nation.

In 1913, Mr. Colpoys purchased the Trades Unionist and edited and published this progressive labor paper thereafter.

Mr. Colpoys acted as one of the first conciliators of the Department of Labor and helped to settle many disputes during and after the first World War. He was a personal friend of the late Samuel Gompers and collaborated closely with other high AFL officials.

Mr. Colpoys leaves two grandchildren and two daughters—Margaret Colpoys, with whom he lived, and Mrs. Wilson K. Hintenmann.

Gov't Aid Now Open To G. I. Wives Under Law Pushed by AFL Unions

Washington, D. C.—Adopted by Congress with the active support of the AFL, an appropriation of $42,300,000 is ready to help 500,000 servicemen's wives and babies in the next year, Katharine F. Lenroot, chief of the child-n's bureau, Department of Labor revealed.

The law is for emergency maternity and infant care and is ready for the wives of men in the four lowest pay grades of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. More than 600,000 babies are being authorized monthly from this fund, which is allotted to state health agencies by the children's bureau, which administers the program.

Every state is now in receipt of all servicemen are eligible to the free benefits. No inquiry as to financial status is made. The government-financed program is available now to provide medical, nursing and hospital care for the service man's wife during pregnancy, childbirth and for 6 months after childbirth. It also covers care for the infant for the first year.

Application blanks for this government care may be obtained from a physician, the local Red Cross, or from the local health department in the city of the applicant. Forms are filled out by the wife and countersigned by the physician. Then they are sent to the health agency of the state in which the applicant is residing.

VETERANS VOTE AGAINST ANTI-LABOR AMENDMENT

Los Angeles.—The Veterans of Foreign Wars in their annual encampment here passed a resolution flatly opposing the "right-to-work" amendment sponsored by the anti-labor Merchants & Manufacturers Association.

The VFW branded the measure, which would wreck all existing union shop contracts, as a potential incitement to industrial warfare, if enacted.

News Briefs

GREEN TO OFFER PLANKS TO DEM. CONVENTION

Chicago.—President William Green will present the American Federation of Labor's platform recommendations to the Resolutions Committee of the Democratic National Convention here on July 18.

The proposals, identical with those submitted to the Republican convention last month, call for a three-way security program, reorganization of the Department of Labor and repeal of the Connally-Smith Act.

COMMANDO KELLY SEEKS TO JOIN TEAMSTERS UNION

Pittsburgh.—Sgt. Charles E. (Commando) Kelly, one of America's great war heroes, holds the Congressional Medal of Honor for his fighting exploits in Italy but he still wants membership—membership in the Teamsters' Union.

His application to join Local 249 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters here has been approved and the hero will initiate him when he returns home after a short War Bond tour. One of his brothers has been a member of the same union for many years.

ITU TO REAFFILIATE WITH AFL IN AUGUST

Washington, D. C.—Arrangements have been completed for the formal reaffiliation of the International Typographical Union with the American Federation of Labor in August.

The members of the union voted to return to the AFL fold in a recent referendum election. President Woodruff Randolph, of the ITU, notified AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany that 60 days must elapse before the union can act on the result of the referendum. He said that it would forward a check for per capita tax on 64,000 members next month. The 800,000 AFL union will be represented at the AFL convention in November.

COURT INVALIDATES PART OF S. D. ANTI-LABOR LAW

Sioux Falls, S. D.—The anti-union law passed in South Dakota in 1943 through the efforts of the Christian American Association was partly outlawed in circuit court here when the State Federation of Labor contested its constitutionality.

Judge Lucius J. Wall held unconstitutional parts of the law which limit picketing, bar solicitation of dues and members on employers' property, and would bar interference with the free movement of agricultural products. Parts of the law requiring unions to file annual statements of income and expenditure were declared constitutional.

WORKERS' IDEAS SAVE ARMY 22 MILLIONS

Washington, D. C.—Civilian employes of the War Department through participation in the "Ideas for Victory" program saved the government an estimated $22,242,197 during the first 12 months of the program and were rewarded $230,714 for their suggestions, Patterson, the War Department announced.

During the first year, employes submitted 109,011 suggestions. Of this total 9,884 were adopted. Cash awards ranged from $5 to $1,250 with three employes receiving the top reward. One suggested a method of doubling the load of boxed artillery on railroad cars effecting an annual savings of $1,000,000, while two other employes collaborated in devising a propeller straightening device which is now saving the government an estimated $1,300,000 annually.

LABOR MAYOR PUSHES PROGRESSIVE CITY ACTION

Richmond, Calif. — Robert D. Lee, this city's new labor mayor, pushed two labor resolutions through the city council on the same day he took office. One resolution condemned the reactionary "right-to-work" constitutional amendment on which California will vote in November. The other criticized inadequate transportation facilities provided for the city's war workers.

Lee was chosen mayor by his fellow councilmen to succeed an oil company executive. He is business representative of the International Rod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union and former president of the Contra Costa Building Trades Council.

Only 11 Percent Of Strike Losses Due To AFL Workers, Survey Shows

Independent Unions Responsible For 71 Percent Of Man-Days Lost, Labor Dept. Finds

Washington, D. C.—Members of the American Federation of Labor have been responsible for only 11 per cent of the total man-days lost due to strikes during 1943. Only 20 per cent of the total number of strikers were AFL workers.

By contrast, the CIO with a fair smaller membership, had 44 per cent of the total number of strikers and they accounted for 16 per cent of the man-days lost.

But the most significant item in the report revealed that unions not affiliated with either the AFL or the CIO were responsible for 71 per cent of the total idleness from strikes in 1943.

The chief reason for this fact was the disastrous coal strike conducted by the United Mine Workers Union, which constituted the one big blot on labor's war record during the year.

Analysis of the figures released by the Labor Department reveals the effective work done by leaders of both AFL and CIO unions in halting strikes once they started.

Although the number of strikes by affiliates was proportionately, large, the time lost was almost infinitesimal because through the efforts of union leaders living up to the no-strike pledge the men were persuaded to go back to work in a day or two in most cases.

The nation did not receive similar cooperation from leaders of "independent" unaffiliated unions which in several instances, openly flouted the no-strike pledge and ordered workers to remain off the job.

One of the best records in 1943 was that of the railroad brotherhoods, most of which are AFL affiliates. They engaged in only seven strikes and accounted for only one-tenth of the total workers involved in strikes.

Another interesting feature of the report shows that jurisdictional strikes have almost disappeared in wartime. A few AFL-CIO disputes cropped up to interfere with production, but strikes caused by jurisdictional troubles between two AFL affiliates were virtually non-existent.

Wages were the issue at stake in more than half the strikes—1,906 out of 3,734—the tabulation disclosed. Most of the wage strikes were demands for increased rates. Many were protests against adjustments of time or piece rates which workers felt would result in lower earnings; others were strikes over application of overtime rates, incentive systems, etc.

More than one-fourth of the total strikes resulted from disputes over working conditions and company policies such as seniority, disciplinary rules, penalty questions, supervision or work loads. About 15.7 percent—or 585 strikes—arose from questions concerning union organization—including recognition as bargaining agent, strengthening of bargaining position, and closed or union shop recognition. Considerably more than half of the strikes involving union organization also concerned wage and hour issues.

Men Built Like Football Players Needed For War Jobs In Foundries

Washington, D. C.—Between 15,000 and 20,000 men with the muscular equipment of football players are needed urgently in the nation's foundries and forge shops, Paul V. McNutt, Chairman of the War Manpower Commission, said. He has sent instructions to regional directors of WMC to begin immediately the recruitment of the men to produce castings and forgings needed in practically every piece of mechanized war equipment.

The foundry shops have been given top priority ratings for employment, Mr. McNutt said. Under the priority referral system, which became effective July 1, the U. S. Employment Service will channel to these industries all available applicants for jobs who have had experience in such work or who believe they can do such work.

"But this drive for foundry and forge workers will not be limited to attempt to get men who go into the shops," Mr. McNutt said. "We intend to scour the communities in which these plants are located in our search for these urgently needed men. We can't afford to take men from other essential industries where they are now contributing importantly to the war effort but we can urge workers in non-essential activities to transfer to the foundries and forges. This we shall do."

The importance of forgings and castings, Mr. McNutt pointed out, is indicated by the fact that while they represent only 5 percent of the total U. S. war production dollars they are used in products which represent more than 50 percent of the country's entire war output.

Machinists Protest Long WLB Delay In Acting On Aircraft Job Pact

Washington, D. C.—A glaring example of interminable delays by the National War Labor Board, which drives workers in war plants to desperation, was cited by the International Association of Machinists.

Eighteen months ago aircraft lodges of this union signed agreements with the Curtiss-Wright Corp. aircraft engine job classification at three plants—in Buffalo, Louisville and St. Louis. After all this time, the WLB has failed to approve or disapprove the pact.

Under the agreement, "simple" and "intermediate" classifications were to be established by the government with progress within a fixed period from the minimum to the maximum wage rates for the grades without action on the way.

Both the union and the company looked upon the plan as fair and said it would raise the morale and efficiency of the workers.

In a joint application, the I. A. M. and the management asked the National War Labor Board to approve the plan. Back in January, 1943, representatives of both sides explained the mechanics of the streamlined program to a WLB panel.

The application crept through the slow-moving machinery of the board while Curtiss-Wright workers became more and more restless. Finally, two months ago the WLB gave its "okay." Then the construction went to "Economic Stabilizer" Fred M. Vinson. His approval was necessary before the plan could be put into effect.

While the agreements was awaiting Vinson's action, the WLB, out of a clear sky, notified the union that the case was being reconsidered. A public hearing, the board said, would be held July 5. A few days later the board postponed the hearing without fixing a date.

"Now, we don't know where we stand," said I. M. MacDonald, official. "This case has been buffeted around so much that our people are up in the air."

"Is it any wonder that workers, confronted by such a frustrating runaround, sometimes blow up? The board expects us to hold our members in line while they fill out strikes. If we can we do it in the face of such procedure!"

N. Y. Labor Act Proves Effective

New York City.—The effectiveness of the New York State Labor Relations Act in promoting satisfactory relations between labor and industry in this State in the seven years of its operation was stressed in a report made public on the anniversary of the passage of the act, by the State Labor Relations Board.

According to the report, the board processed 11,298 labor-dispute cases since its establishment, affecting 4,900,000 employes in various trades and industries. Three hundred and three of these cases were pending on June 30, 1944.

Of the 11,298 cases, in 4,508 or 39 percent, employers were charged with unfair labor practices. The remaining 6,790 were petitions filed by unions and employers requesting investigation and certification of collective bargaining representatives.

Almost 9 out of every 10 cases before the board were adjusted through consenting settlements, withdrawal or dismissal without the necessity of formal hearing. An additional 5 per cent were adjusted amicably by the parties after the board had authorized formal hearing. In only 278 of the unfair labor practice cases did the board find it necessary to issue cease and desist orders.

The report stressed "the healthful trend reflected by the continued increase in the number of petitions for elections to test employes' choice of bargaining representatives; the number of charges of unfair labor practice against employers." The proportion of election petitions to all cases filed with the board has risen from 52 per cent in 1938 and 68 percent in 1942 to 76 percent in 1943.